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COUNTRY Soviet Zone of Germany

REPORT NO.

TOPIC Widening of Roadbed Section of the Elbe River Bridge Near Wittenberge

EVALUATION 25X1 PLACE OBTAINED 25X1

DATE OF CONTENT October 1949 to 17 July 1950

DATE OBTAINED 25X1 DATE PREPARED 5 September 1950

REFERENCES 25X1

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

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REMARKS

25X1 1. It was learned on 24 and 25 October 1949 that the project to widen the roadbed section of the Elbe bridge is progressing. The upstream bridge section, which after it was laid with planking served exclusively for road traffic, was to be made serviceable for track-laying vehicles with a width up to 340 cm. A member of the German Economic Commission (DEK), in charge of bridge construction came to Wittenberge (E 53/Y 69) to study the advantage of two designs. By one design the roadbed is to be raised 40 cm and in the second design the stiffeners (inclined streets) are to be replaced by others which are more inclined. * The second design will probably be selected. The costs were estimated at 120,000 DM. The date of completion was set as 1 January 1950. The decision on the design rests with the SCC.

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2. The following order was from

"German Railroad General Directorate
VI 47 -

21 December 1949

25X1 To the Government of Land Brandenburg in Potsdam

The widening of the roadbed section of the Elbe bridge near Wittenberg has to be started immediately in accordance with Letter No 23/2502 of the Transport Department of the Soviet Control Commission, dated 16 December 1949. Design II which provides for an alteration of the stiffeners (inclined streets) of the steel structure was selected. To support the tips of the ties, two sets of longitudinal girders have to be put in. The costs previously calculated at 170,000 DM will be increased to 280,000 DM. The work must be completed by late January 1950. The railroad directorate in Schwerin was ordered to start work on this project. "

3. On 27 December 1949 it was learned that the roadbed of the Elbe bridge will probably be widened by altering the gusset plates. In addition to the two

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existing longitudinal supports of the roadbed, two parallel sets of girders are to be put in. A representative of the bridge section of the railroad directorate in Schwerin (M 54/T 46) went to Berlin on 27 December 1949 to discuss this plan.

4. On 29 December 1949 it was learned that the steel work order will be given to the Nordstahl Firm in Rostock (M 55/O 81), and the wood, stone, and excavation work order to the Kommunale Baubetriebe Firm in Perleberg (M 54/T 70). The costs were estimated at 140,000 DM. The date of completion was set as 31 January 1950.
5. Soviet officers surveyed the widening of the roadbed of the Elbe bridge near Wittenberge which will be started soon. On 8 January 1950, German workers who had been given this dismissal notices were told that the notices were withdrawn and they would start work on 9 January 1950. The roadbed is to be made serviceable for Soviet tanks. The roadbed was to be widened by shortening the stiffeners which support and stabilize the girders. The stiffener on each side was to be shortened 30 cm which will widen the roadbed 60 cm. However, German experts pointed out that this would mean a reduction in the load capacity of the bridge, but the Soviets insisted on a load capacity of 75 tons. Soviet officers remarked that the heaviest tanks would have to cross the bridge one at a time.
6. The work on the roadbed was checked by a colonel from the road administration in Karlshorst on 17 March 1950. He ordered the work to be completed by 31 March 1950, but later 15 April 1950 was agreed upon as the date of completion. On 17 March 1950 the flood water spans of the bridge, and the two "R" (Roth) military bridge spans were complete and the old steel spans were 45 percent completed.
7. On 1 April 1950 it was learned that work involved in widening the roadbed of the Elbe bridge was still in progress and was 70 percent complete. Daily reports on the progress of the work had to be made to the Kommandatura in Perleberg (M 54/T 70).
8. On 15 April 1950 the completed roadbed was 360 cm wide. The widening was completed except for laying about 400 wooden reinforcement ties which are to be used instead of the sets of longitudinal girders which are not available.
9. On 13 June 1950 it was learned that the Elbe bridge had been widened 40 cm by order of the Soviet commanding officer. This was done by shortening the stiffeners. Heavy tanks can now pass over the bridge.
10. On 17 July 1950 the reinforcement of the roadbed, which was widened to 360 cm, was almost complete. Four hundred and twenty new reinforcement ties, 24x24 cm, each 4 meters long, were inserted in every second tie section. The total cost of the work was about 280,000 DM. The completion of the work was delayed by a lack of split nails. Between 60,000 and 80,000 of these, which are from 4-mm sheet iron, were required. The paving at the section connecting with the Wittenberge road was about 80 percent complete. *

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Comment. For sketch of the two designs see Annex. Information on the rail and road bridge across the Elbe River near Wittenberge, the widening of the roadbed which has been planned since late 1949, was previously submitted.

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Since the roadbed of this bridge was only 300 cm wide it could not be used by the heaviest Soviet tanks which are 320 cm wide. The first design to widen the roadbed provided for lifting the roadbed planking over the stiffeners. The roadbed was finally widened to 360 cm by shortening the stiffeners. This measure, however, reduced the stability of the braces of the bridge and required the insertion of reinforcement ties. The road crossing near Wittenberge is a section of Reichsstrasse No 189. It is the only road bridge in the Elbe River section between Tangermünde and Doernitz, which is a distance of about 100 km.

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